	POLICY 1.5	Version:	9
	Community Engagement	Date Adopted:	14 June 2022
		Next Review Due:	June 2026

1. STATEMENT

Wattle Range Council acknowledges the benefits that can be derived from meaningful communication and consultation with the community and values input from residents and stakeholders who have an interest in issues affecting their lives, where Council has responsibility and influence. It is an important role for Council to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for residents to be involved in consultation and communication about issues of concern, to present information, to provide options for consideration and to ensure Council decisions are informed and sound.

Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999* requires Council to consult on a range of issues. There are also situations where there is no legislative requirement to consult the community, but Council may choose to undertake varying levels of community engagement. This policy sets out how Council will engage with the community in its decision making processes.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Enable the community to be informed about and contribute to Council planning and decision making;
- Guide effective engagement between Council and the community;
- Provide the framework for appropriately structured, targeted and delivered community engagement as part of Council's decision making;
- Support Council's decision making which is open, transparent, responsive, inclusive and accountable to the community;
- Promote and maintain positive relations between Council and the community.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

Communication involves the provision of information by Council in a timely and accessible manner.

Community means all people who, own property, live, work, study or conduct business in, or who visit use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places of the Wattle Range Council.

Community Engagement means the involvement of the community in decision making processes, which is critical in the successful development of acceptable policies and sustainable decisions in government, the private sector and the community.

Consultation is a two way process of seeking responses from the Community and other affected prior to Council making a decision that may have implications on the wider community.

Council means the Wattle Range Council.


IAP2 is the International Association for Public Participation, Australasia.

3. PRINCIPLES

1.1 Community Engagement Framework

Council will use the following framework to guide planning and implementing effective community engagement that can be adapted to suit a wide range of circumstances. The framework is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) model and adapted for Local Government purposes.

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Community engagement can take several forms and may occur across one or more different levels, including:

Inform	One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or happened.
Consult	Two way communications designed to obtain feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
Involve	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.
Collaborate	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

Framework based on IAP2 model and sourced from reference 6.1.1

The following Public Participation Spectrum will be used to assist Council with determining the community's level of participation in any community engagement process. Throughout the process of community engagement there is likely to be movement back and forth along the Spectrum before the Council can make a final decision.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
Example Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures/Fact sheets • Media releases • Newsletters • Website • Public notices and advertisements • Public displays • Reports • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Meeting with stakeholders • Surveys • Petitions • Deputations • Public meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Working groups • Inviting written submissions • Meeting with stakeholders • Public displays, speaking directly with the public in high traffic areas (e.g. supermarkets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 41 Committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision-making • Community forums


Framework based on IAP2 model and sourced from reference 6.1.1

1.2 When to undertake community engagement

Council will undertake community engagement when a statutory obligation exists to engage the community. Appendix A provides a guidance list of obligations.

Where an inconsistency exists between a legislative requirement for engagement or consultation and this policy, the requirements of the legislation takes precedence over this Policy.

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Council may also consider undertaking community engagement in accordance with this policy in the following circumstances:

- The future use of a significant area of land is being decided.
- There is likely to be significant impact, community concern or community interest in the issue or outcome.
- The decision of Council is anticipated to have significant impact on the economy, lifestyle or environment.
- The decision or proposal is likely to require substantial redirection of ratepayer revenue.
- There is information needed by Elected Members or Council staff about community needs and priorities, to ensure planning is appropriate and decisions are sound.
- On any other issue which it considers appropriate.

1.3 Determining how the Community will be Engaged

When Council decides to undertake Community Engagement the following steps will be considered in determining how the community will be engaged:

1.3.1 Clarify the Decision to be Made

It is important to be clear about the decision to be made. An effective decision statement should be:

- clear and descriptive on what the decision / purpose / objectives / opportunity / issue / project is and contain what the public needs to consider
- reflect the needs of the decision makers and the public
- expressed clearly and in common language

1.3.2 Identify Key Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as someone who may be affected by or have a specific interest in the decision or issue under consideration.

Council will develop a list of potential stakeholders.

1.3.3 Consider Legislative Requirements

Identify legislative obligations that require consultation or engagement that apply to the situation and implement prescribed steps.


1.3.4 Select a Level of Community Engagement

Use the Public Participation Spectrum above to select the level(s) of engagement to be utilised.

The following factors may also be considered in determining the level of community engagement:

- Geographic boundaries of the proposal (e.g. natural, constructed, wards, etc.);
- Preferences of proposed stakeholders;
- Funding available for the project and for engagement;
- Potential barriers to participation;
- Strategic importance of project or issue to be consulted upon;
- Perceived level of community interest in the project or issue;
- Timing of project and engagement methods:

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- For the purposes of determining the period of public engagement, consideration will be given to avoiding public holidays, Easter and Christmas/New Year periods unless there are compelling reasons for engagement to be held during these times. The period of consultation will be a minimum of 21 days unless legislatively required to be a different length.
- What is open for negotiation and what is not.

1.3.5 Set Up and Maintain a Community Engagement Record

Council will maintain records used and produced throughout the community engagement process which may include and is not limited to:

- Relevant Council reports
- Media releases
- Briefing papers
- Project briefs and proposal
- Project team meeting notes
- Communication materials (hardcopy & electronic)
- Public participation registrations
- Survey feedback and responses
- Project plans and drawings
- Feedback and Outcome reports

1.3.6 Collate and Analyse Information

Prepare a report for Council that takes into account the collated feedback and provides Elected Members with the information and sufficient time they need to inform their final decision.

1.3.7 Make a Decision and Implement the Final Decision

When a decision has been made, feedback should be provided to stakeholders who contributed to the community engagement process.

1.4 Community Information


Wattle Range Council may require submissions or reports to state the name, address and contact details of respondents or participants in community engagement activities. This information, including the names, may be tabled at a public meeting of Council. If a respondent does not wish their details to be tabled they must inform Council in writing at the time of making their submission or participation providing reasons why their details should be excluded.

4. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Reviews and amendments of this policy must be done in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999* (section 50), including requirements for consultation.

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5. AVAILABILITY

This Policy will be available for inspection without charge at the following locations during ordinary business hours:

- Council Website: www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au.

A copy of the policy may be purchased from Council Offices upon payment of a prescribed fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

6. REFERENCES & FURTHER READING


6.1 References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wattle Range Council Strategic Community Plan; • Community Engagement Handbook, A Model Framework for leading practice in Local Government in South Australia, revised Barbara Chappell 2012; • International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org
6.2 Relevant Legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> (SA) (Section 50) • <i>Public Access and Public Consultation Notice (No 2) 2020</i>
6.3 Relevant Policies / Procedures / Guidelines	<p>This Policy should be read in conjunction with:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 1.25 Media & Online Communications • Code of Conduct - Council Employees

7. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT HISTORY:

Version No:	Issue Date:	Authorised by:	Description of Change:	Minutes Reference:
	20/06/2000		Adopted	
	20/01/2009	Council	Community Engagement Policy & Strategy	
	14/09/2010	Council	Amended	Folio 4447; Item 11.1.8
	14/12/2010	Council	Reviewed	Folio 4496; Item 16.1.7
	11/12/2012	Council	Reviewed	Folio 4847; Item 11.1.9
7	09/08/2016	Council	Amended. Change to IAP2 Approach	Folio 6461; Item 13.2.3
8	12/05/2020	Council	Amended due to changes to the Local Government Act (COVID-19 & Minister's notice)	Folio 8974; Item 15.1.3
9	24/06/2022	Council	Amended due to the changes to the Emergency Management Declaration	Folio 10207; Item 15.1.3

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APPENDIX A - List of Legislative Requirements for Public Consultation

IMPORTANT NOTE: This information is provided as guidance only and the relevant legislation should always be referred to for the most up to date information. Note that not all legislative requirements are listed here.

Requirements in the *Local Government Act 1999*

TOPIC	SECTION
Definition of Public Consultation	s.4
Representation Reviews Review and reporting to the Electoral Commissioner	s.12
Status of a Council/ Change of Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change from a municipal Council to a district Council, or change from a district Council to a municipal Council Alter the name of the Council, the area of the Council, or the name of a ward. 	s.13
Principal Office – Opening hours	s.45
Commercial Activities – Prudential Requirements	s.48(2)(d) s.48(5) and s.48(6)
Public Consultation Policies	s.50
Code of Practice – Access to meetings and documents	s.92(5)
Strategic Management Plans	s.122(6)
Annual Business Plan	s.123(3)
Change to Basis of Rating Report	s.151(6)
Rating – Differential Rates	s.156(14a)
Community Land Classification All local government land (except a road) acquired by or brought under the care, control and management of Council is taken to have been classified as community land unless Council resolves before it becomes local government land to exclude it from classification. Revocation of classification of land as community land	s.193(4)
Management Plans – Public Consultation Amendment or revocation of management plans NB: A Council cannot dispose of community land until revocation of its classification as community land.	s.194(2) s.197(1) s.198
Alienation by lease or licence NB: Specific provisions relate to the Adelaide Park Lands – under the <i>Parklands Act 2005</i>	s.202
Authorisations / Permits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where road would be fenced enclosed or portioned so as to impede passage of traffic to a material degree Use or activity for which public consultation required under regulations 	s.223
Roads – Trees	s.232
Passing by-laws NB: No specific reference to Council's Public Consultation Policy, but minimum standards apply	s.249
Power to Make Orders Councils must take reasonable steps to prepare and adopt policies relating to power to make orders.	s.259(2)

Requirements in the Development Act and Regulations

In relation to building and development, the prescribed level of consultation can be found in Section 38 of the *Development Act 1993* and Part 6 of the Development Regulations 2008.

Note: Where there are legislative requirements for consultations under other legislation, for example the Development Act, then these take precedence over the Public Consultation and Community Engagement Policy if there is any inconsistency.

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